

PEOPLE & THINGS

A HUNDRED and fifty years after Trafalgar, Horatio Nelson stands confirmed not only as one of the greatest of Englishmen but as a man who sparks even the most sluggish imagination. When I learned, therefore, that one of the attractions of this year's Bath Festival was to be a reconstruction of the Battle of Trafalgar, and that this entertainment was to be entrusted to Mr. Moran Caplat, the General Manager of Glyndebourne, I decided that the venture was sufficiently pertinent to deserve investigation.

Nelson Redivivus

MR. CAPLAT is a quiet-spoken and trim-bearded young man who knows the Navy at first hand (he served in submarines during the war and was one of the few survivors when his ship was sunk by the Italians in the Mediterranean). He regards the problem of transferring Trafalgar to dry land with a confidence which would seem to be shared by the Admiralty, which has despatched a Commander, R.N., to Bath as official liaison officer to the project.

"What we're aiming at," said Mr. Caplat, "is to mix the technique of the sound-radio feature programme with the wide popular appeal of 'Robinson Crusoe on Ice.' It won't be a pageant, or a tattoo, in the traditional sense, but a coherent narrative that begins with Nelson's departure from Portsmouth and goes through to the end of the battle."

If this can be done on a football field at ten o'clock on an English summer evening it will be one of the greatest feats of ingenuity in the history of outdoor entertainment, and one that calls for a cool daring that Nelson himself would have applauded.

Reporter Extraordinary

IN inviting Mr. William Faulkner to report on an ice-hockey match at Madison Square Garden, the editor of the American weekly "Sports Illustrated" brought off one of the most imaginative journalistic assignments since Malarine was asked for his views on "Should Women Bicyclists Wear Trousers?"

The Nobel Prizewinning novelist was slow to warm to the match between Montreal and the New York Rangers. It was not, he decided, like football, where "sweating baredhanded behemoths emerge from the troglodyte mass." It was, indeed, "discarded and inconsequent, bizarre and paradoxical," and as for the favourites of the crowd, the fast-flying Huttons and Harveys of the ice, their activities seemed to him like nothing so much as "the frantic darting of the weightless bugs which run on the surface of stagnant pools."

I wish he were in Adelaide just now.

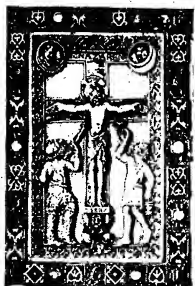
For Export?

FEW things of its kind are more beautiful than the Golden Evangelary which was devised early in the tenth century by the Benedictine monks of Echternach. Originally the property of the Emperor Otto III, it came into the possession of the Coburg family just over a hundred years ago; and today, when the Coburgs have lost

By ATTICUS

all but a tithe of their former vast territorial holdings, it is being offered for sale.

American interests, I understand, have put in a bid of 400,000 dollars for the Golden Codex, which is at present in safe keeping in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. There are many people in Germany who would like to see it remain in the country; but a



million marks is a great deal of taxpayers' money, and I am not surprised that there is the liveliest controversy about whether or not the American figure, or something near to it, should be raised from public funds.

A Superlative Binding

THE Codex itself is written in gold on vellum and is exquisitely illuminated. Perhaps its noblest feature, however, is the great binding, which is of beechwood encased in beaten gold. It is ornamented with portraits of Otto III and his mother, and in the centre there is an ivory carving, which I reproduce here, of Christ on the Cross, with centurion and soldier to hold lance and sponge. It is one of the finest of early European bindings, and I well remember the star which it created when it was on show in Berne not long after the war.

Conscience Money

ELSEWHERE in this issue my colleague Harold Hobson discusses the current renaissance of the Spanish theatre.

This renaissance has had its repercussions, I hear, in the bullion-vaults of Madrid. For Senor Joaquin Sotelo's play "La Muralla" ("The Wall") is not just a memorable entertainment. It is a sermon, and one which bears directly upon a society which has recently experienced a civil war. Properties acquired by sharp practice at such times, says this stern moralist, must, in Christian duty and on pain of eternal damnation, be returned to their former owners. And so vividly does he say it that confessional and sacrilege are thronged, it would seem, with those who seek to act upon his words. In one church alone, £4,000 has been handed in during

the last few weeks; and there are many such examples.

The play is doubtless being considered for publication in London.

Bank-Breaker

THE problem of how to win at roulette has tormented the loftiest of minds. The late Lord Keynes, for instance, once left at an hour's notice for an obscure Belgian casino which was reported to omit the 0 from its wheels; and many a less-gifted calculator has spent years in search of the key to success.

This combination would seem to have been discovered by a young German enthusiast, Herr Winkel, who is reported to have won £200,000 during the last two years in one or another of the nine German casinos. His calculations, though expressed in elaborate geometrical form, require the assistance of a large general staff of trained observers; and I foresee a series of spirited clashes if he and his subordinates carry out their threat to begin operations later this year in the casinos of the Côte d'Azur. As his normal playing-schedule is ten hours a day, three weeks out of every four, there can be no question of those isolated, quasi-inspirational coups de main with which every reader of romantic fiction is familiar.

A 3-2-3 Man

NOT long ago Mr. J. M. Bannerman, who has played rugby for Scotland more often (thirty-seven times) than anybody else, and is the darling of the Liberal Party since his minor triumph in the Inverness by-election, was probably the most popular man in Scotland.

But then he asked Scottish rugby clubs to go back to the old 3-2-3 formation in the scrum; and on January 8 Scotland were soundly beaten in Paris.

A famous player, now retired, was recently asked what was wrong with Scottish rugby.

"John Bannerman," he said. "He's a Liberal, he's a Covenantor, and he's a 3-2-3 man. Three lost causes! We might as well give up the game."

Neither the 3-2-3 formation nor Mr. Bannerman is in any way responsible for Scotland's decline; but another defeat next Saturday won't make it easier to say so.

Flowers of Speech

ON the pavement, not far from THE SUNDAY TIMES office, a street flower-seller has his pitch. Like ourselves, he believes in the written word—to the extent, indeed, of attracting his customers' attention with messages chalked on a blackboard.

These often display a macabre humour such as the Gravedigger in "Hamlet" might envy. ("You Don't Like My Flowers? They'll Grow On You in the End.") But more recently, when the weather was at its sulkiest and his spring flowers were freckled with soot, he took a more laconic line.

"My Business Smells" was all he could bear to write.